

Vienna, April 23rd, 2012
Meeting of the IAHS Task Force on the new Science Initiative
Open to IAHS Officers and blog contributors

Participants:

Gordon Young - GY
Alberto Montanari – AM
Attilio Castellarin – AC
Keith Beven – KB
Bob Su – BS
Hubert Savenjie – HB
Eva Boegh – EB
Siva Sivapalan – MS
Demetris Koutsoyiannis – DK
Alberto Viglione – AV
Salvatore Grimaldi – SG
Fabrizio Fenicia – FF
Hoshin Gupta – HG
Ciaran Harman - CH
Berit Arheimer – BA
Christian Stamm - CS
Stan Schymanski – SS
Gabriele Baroni – GB
Jose Salinas – JS
Thorsten Wagener – TW
Pat Reid – PR
Greg Characklis - GC

GY: welcomes participants and introduces AM

AM: summarizes the state of the art concerning the blog (summary, deadlines, etc.), reminds participants to submit abstracts to the Delft meeting

GY: illustrate how the round table will be structured

DK: congratulates with AM for the way in which the blog discussion is coordinated, and states his disappointment for the somewhat limited number of posts so far. Hydrology and Society is a good target, but the Initiative should not be too much restrictive. PUB was inclusive. All scientific disciplines need to deal with Society (Meteorology too for instance, and they provide Society with a better service than hydrologists up to now). Important issues: (a) identify what the practical role of Hydrology to serve Society is; (b) be honest in dealing with Society

GC: How can Hydrology serve Society? Papers should be more consistent in describing how research outcome may serve societal needs (usually the mention to society is limited to the introduction and conclusions of scientific papers)

CS: Co-evolution of catchments and Society. Interdisciplinarity is needed linking scientific research and management issues: how wide should the spectrum be? It is important not only to focus on “pristine” catchments for hydrological research but to include also the majority of the catchments, which are (heavily) impacted by human interventions.

GY: sustaining ecosystems is very important.

HG: states that he feels uncomfortable with the discussion so far. Initially he felt uncomfortable with PUB too, because he felt that the Initiative title did not have a significant meaning, but eventually he acknowledged the broad perspective that made PUB very inclusive. PUB was very motivating, nevertheless it makes it hard to get credits. A possible solution would be to narrow our target for the Initiative, but that could hamper some members of our community to contribute.

GY: expresses his appreciation for the discussion and the points raised.

SS: A new Initiative should bring a change in the system. It should consider a challenge that has not been considered so far. Change would be a good topic to address.

FF: Hydrology is about understanding how catchment works. Expresses his concerns that the new initiative is not going in this direction.

AM: Socio-hydrology, the study of the interactions between Hydrology and Society, is becoming more and more important.

BS: Can we address these issues quantitatively? Can we assess the feedbacks of change on hydrology? What kind of observations do we need?

HS: Issue of change is wider than everything else. If we aim at predicting we need to understand how the system evolves. Society cannot be seen separately because there is an intimate connection. Co-evolution with Society is very important for Hydrology.

TW: Society needs to be a central theme, if Society is not interested in what we are doing we lose momentum. Change is “the” topic on the table right now, and has to be addressed by the initiative. The science plan should be developed in order to gain as many contributions as possible.

SG: PUB represented a flag for many young researchers and made them feel part of the Community. Interaction with decision makers represents a big gap.

KB: PUB addressed an impossible problem, and it had a lot of contributions. Predictions under change is also an impossible problem, with the potential of getting a lot of contributions. Emphasis should be put on committing on measuring techniques.

BA: all kinds of change should be considered.

GB: Society is important but it should not be the central theme of this initiative.

PR: Policy issues are always involved and we should be very careful in setting the boundary of the system.

KH: the study of how hydrology and society interact is definitely important.

AV: it is important to address challenging topics and problems. Predictions under change has this feature and can also attract many contributions. Perhaps it should be nice to start with a general problem and then evolve.

HB: Society is relevant and also a part of science, therefore could be an important component of the initiative.

CS: High societal impacts of hydrology are already a fact and some changes are rather certain despite large uncertainties in (climate) predictions: in the Alps, for example new lakes will come into existence naturally due to the retreat of the glaciers. Such developments have ramification for the natural as well as for the societal system.

MS: humans are already part of the system (this is unavoidable), together with topography, climate, soil and vegetation). Including humans in the picture is a new problem and it bring all sort of new questions.

SS: The initiative deliverables should support decisions.

MS: PUB is about understanding and we should keep the focus on understanding.

DK: The importance of "understanding" has been oversold. "Understanding" is subjective and is not necessarily the goal of science in general and hydrology in particular; hydrologists should answer specific and precise problems.

BS: the initiative is set in a global framework. What do we want to "sell" to Society and what answers are we willing to give to Society?

AM: expresses deep satisfaction for the discussion. Change is definitely on the table and is very broad. The science plan needs to be illustrated and structured in order for all topics to be exciting and inclusive.

GY: thanks all participants. Underlines that a lot of IAHS people are already involved primarily in water-resources management problems. Keywords of the initiative should be: change, uncertainty, risk and vulnerability.